

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 5, 6, 9 to 14, 18 and 19 were previously withdrawn.

Claims 1 to 4, 7, 8, 15 to 17, 20, 22-24, 26, 28-31 and 36 were previously canceled.

Claims 21 to 40 were previously presented.

Claims 21, 32, and 33 are currently amended.

Claims 37-40 are currently canceled.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1 to 4. (Previously Canceled).

5. (Withdrawn) A substantially purified cell signaling protein comprising a polypeptide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

a.) a substantially purified cell signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 80% sequence identity to the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:4;

b.) a substantially purified cell signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:4;

c.) a substantially purified cell signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 95% sequence identity to the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:4;

d.) an isolated and substantially purified human cell-signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade and encoded by the nucleic acid sequence of ATCC Accession No. PTA-3161;

e.) a substantially purified cell signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 80% sequence identity to the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:7 or SEQ ID NO:9;

f.) a substantially purified cell signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:7 or SEQ ID NO:9;

g.) a substantially purified cell signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade and encoded by a polynucleotide having a nucleic acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3, or a nucleic acid sequence degenerate from that of SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3 as a result of redundancy of the genetic code;

- h.) a substantially purified cell signaling protein having the amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:7 or SEQ ID NO:9;
- i.) an isolated polypeptide comprising amino acids 2 to 476 of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein said amino acids 2 to 476 comprise a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2 minus the start methionine;
- j.) a RET16 variant protein encoded by a nucleic acid sequence encoding the protein having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:13;
- k.) an isolated RET16.2 variant protein encoded by the nucleic acid sequence of ATCC Deposit Accession No. PTA-3161;
- l.) a RET16 variant protein encoded by the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:12;
- m.) an isolated polypeptide comprising amino acids 2 to 384 of SEQ ID NO:13, wherein said amino acids 2 to 384 comprise a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:13 minus the start methionine;
- n.) a RET16 variant protein encoded by a nucleic acid sequence encoding the protein having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:15;
- o.) an isolated RET16.3 variant protein encoded by the nucleic acid sequence of ATCC Deposit Accession No. PTA-3161;
- p.) a RET16 variant protein encoded by the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:14;
- q.) an isolated polypeptide comprising amino acids 2 to 502 of SEQ ID NO:15, wherein said amino acids 2 to 502 comprise a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:15 minus the start methionine;
- r.) a RET16 protein encoded by a nucleic acid sequence encoding the protein having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:7;
- s.) a RET16 protein encoded by the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:6;
- t.) an isolated polypeptide comprising amino acids 2 to 475 of SEQ ID NO:7, wherein said amino acids 2 to 475 comprise a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:7 minus the start methionine;
- u.) a substantially purified cell signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 82% sequence identity to the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:13; and
- v.) a substantially purified cell signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 95% sequence identity to the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:15.

6. (Withdrawn) A purified antibody which binds specifically to the protein or polypeptide according to claim 5, or an antigenic epitope thereof.

7 and 8. (Previously Canceled).

9. (Withdrawn) A method of screening a library of molecules or compounds with a polynucleotide encoding a protein involved in the cell signaling cascade to identify at least one molecule or compound therein which specifically binds to the polynucleotide sequence, comprising:

- a) combining the polynucleotide according to claim 1 with a library of test molecules or compounds under conditions to allow specific binding; and

b) detecting specific binding, thereby identifying a test molecule or compound which specifically binds to the polynucleotide sequence.

10. (Withdrawn) A method of screening for candidate compounds capable of modulating activity of a cell signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade, comprising:

- a) contacting a test compound with a cell or tissue expressing the protein according claim 5; and
- b) selecting as candidate modulating compounds those test compounds that modulate activity of the protein involved in the cell signaling cascade.

11. (Withdrawn) A method of treating an inflammation-related disease or disorder in a mammal comprising administration of the protein according to claim 5 in an amount effective to treat the inflammation-related disease or disorder.

12. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 11, wherein the disease or disorder is selected from the group consisting of rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile arthritis, psoriasis, asthma, ischemia-reperfusion, multiple sclerosis, rejection of organ or tissue transplants, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, Inacute respiratory distress syndrome, systemic lupus erythematosus, cystic fibrosis, autoimmune diseases, cancers, tumors and neoplasms.

13. (Withdrawn) A method of screening for compounds which inhibit or prevent binding of a human cell signaling protein with a second cell signaling protein, comprising:

- (a) contacting the cell signaling protein according claim 5 with a second cell signaling molecule with which it binds or associates in the presence or absence of a test compound under conditions which permit binding; and
- (b) determining if the level of binding of the cell signaling protein with the second cell signaling molecule is reduced or inhibited by comparing the level of binding in the presence of the test compound with that in the absence of the test compound.

14. (Withdrawn) A method of identifying compounds that inhibit the phosphorylation of a cell signaling cascade protein by protein kinases, comprising:

- (a) binding the cell signaling cascade protein according to claim 5 to a solid substrate in a reaction buffer containing ^{32}P -gamma-ATP under conditions to allow binding of the cell signaling protein to the substrate;
- (b) adding protein kinase in the presence or absence of a test compound; and
- (c) determining of the presence of the test compound results in a decrease in the amount of ^{32}P label that is incorporated into the cell signaling cascade protein, compared with the level of phosphorylation observed in the absence of the test compound to identify a test compound that inhibits phosphorylation of the cell signaling cascade protein.

15 to 17. (Previously Canceled).

18. (Withdrawn) A substantially purified cell signaling protein consisting of a polypeptide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

- a) an isolated polypeptide consisting of amino acids 2 to 476 of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein said amino acids 2 to 476 comprise a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2 minus the start methionine;
- b) a RET16 variant protein encoded by a nucleic acid sequence encoding the protein having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:13;
- c) an isolated RET16.2 variant protein encoded by the nucleic acid sequence of ATCC Deposit Accession No. PTA-3161;
- d) a RET16 variant protein encoded by the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:12;
- e) an isolated polypeptide consisting of amino acids 2 to 384 of SEQ ID NO:13, wherein said amino acids 2 to 384 comprise a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:13 minus the start methionine;
- f) a RET16 variant protein encoded by a nucleic acid sequence encoding the protein having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:15;
- g) an isolated RET16.3 variant protein encoded by the nucleic acid sequence of ATCC Deposit Accession No. PTA-3161;
- h) a RET16 variant protein encoded by the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:14;
- i) an isolated polypeptide consisting of amino acids 2 to 502 of SEQ ID NO:15, wherein said amino acids 2 to 502 comprise a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:15 minus the start methionine;
- j) a RET16 protein encoded by a nucleic acid sequence encoding the protein having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:7;
- k) a RET16 protein encoded by the polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:6;
- l) an isolated polypeptide consisting of amino acids 2 to 475 of SEQ ID NO:7, wherein said amino acids 2 to 475 comprise a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:7 minus the start methionine;
- m) a substantially purified cell signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade consisting of an amino acid sequence having at least 82% sequence identity to the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:13; and
- n) a substantially purified cell signaling protein involved in the cell signaling cascade consisting of an amino acid sequence having at least 95% sequence identity to the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:15.

19. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 11, wherein the disease or disorder is selected from the group consisting of: disorders associated with aberrant activation of the TNF- α pathway, disorders associated with aberrant cellular migration, disorders associated with aberrant cellular proliferation, disorders associated with aberrant cellular metastasis, asthma, juvenile idiopathic arthritis, hematogenous metastases of tumor cells, hyperinsulinaemia, diabetes type 2, atherosclerosis, cardiovascular disease, tumour progression, metastasis, colon cancer, Wegener's granulomatosis, stem cell transplantation complications, thalassemia, atherosclerosis, autoimmune disease atherosclerosis, ischemia-reperfusion injury, acute lung

injury, rheumatoid arthritis, graft rejection, systemic lupus, coronary artery calcification, ischaemic heart, and allergic inflammation.

20. (Previously Canceled).

21. (Currently Amended) An isolated polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence having at least ~~97%~~ sequence identity with the sequence of SEQ ID NO:12.

22 - 24 (canceled)

25. (previously amended) The isolated polynucleotide of claim 21, wherein said polynucleotide comprises nucleotides 114 to 1262 of SEQ ID NO:12.

26. (canceled)

27. (previously amended) The isolated polynucleotide of claim 21, wherein said polynucleotide comprises nucleotides 111 to 1262 of SEQ ID NO:12.

28. to 31. (Previously Canceled).

32. (currently amended) A composition comprising an isolated polynucleotide according to claims 21, 25 or 27.

33. (currently amended) An expression vector containing an isolated polynucleotide according to claims 21, 25 or 27.

34. (previously amended) An isolated host cell containing an expression vector according to claim 33.

35. (previously presented) A method for producing a protein involved in the cell signaling cascade comprising the steps of:

- a) culturing the host cell according to claim 34 under conditions suitable for the expression of the polypeptide; and
- b) recovering the polypeptide from the host cell culture.

36 (previously canceled)

37- 40. (Canceled)